

THE CHOCOLATE SPECTRUM AS RIDICULER

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The Making of Indigeneity: Curriculum History and the Limits of Diversity

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The challenge for me in being asked to respond to Dr. López's book is where do I start, and how do I accelerate my intimacy with the work in which Dr. López has had the time to cultivate deep intimacy? My reading journey with her book has been a jagged series of non-linear pathways of tacking back and forth through my internal conversations loosely archived through illegible scribbles in my reading journal and the book's margins. To be completely vulnerable with you all, or rather y'all, I'm lost. However, when I say lost, I am not speaking in a negative connotation. Rather this sense of lost parallels a similar sensation incited when listening to Herbie Hancock strike a chord on the piano. You know that simultaneous sounding of notes, in which Hancock hints at the composition's principle tonality, while also adding and re-orientating a few other notes in that chord, as to say to the listener, "have you considered hearing it this way?" and/or "hey, in this point of my dreaming out loud, I heard this possibility." Similarly, the chance to read Licho's book was to engage in a series of discourses in which she asked the reader...me...us...to reorient the thinking and/or reimagine research in light of dynamic carceral entities. In my journey, I circled back to the chapter titled "Anthropological Borders and the Performance of Diversity in Teacher Preparation Classrooms." In the last line of this chapter López writes "The future, as a category of thinking, is up to what emerges in the playful act of ridicule" (López, 2018, p. 121). Additionally, on the previous page of this chapter Lopez writes,

By looking again, histories can be made outside the spatialization of time, or linear progressive time, as the possible template in "people-space" relations. This could be possible when education quits giving in to the taming and making of societies, and when teaching drops out of the looping effect of converting people into the next prefabricated inter-multicultural citizen in need of fixing." (López, 2018, p. 120)

Perhaps the important specter in these statements from López comes from inquiring as to what might continue the re-embodiment of "the playful act of ridicule" and which bodies shall engage in this ridicule. It was with this in mind that I was reminded about of deep education. Cornel West, in his 2014 address to the student body at the University of Bothell-Washington, situates one of the tenants of deep education as the restlessness of equity, along with Angela Davis (2012) in her 2005 address in Boulder, Colorado titled "Radical

Multiculturalism” who harshly critiques shallow multiculturalism along with the discourses of neoliberalistic democracy, posing the reminder that the utilization of multiculturalism in these contexts around liberation is mere code for being about one’s right/obligation to take part in a free market economy. Altogether, the collective critique West and Davis articulates how López’s point of “the playful act of ridicule” does in fact for them begin, as West would say, “on the chocolate side.” It is ridicule through necessity and hope for deep education. I read through Licho, West, and Davis, which calls on the chocolate spectrum as situated in an afro-surrealist ethic. In writing these words, I felt...role call open parenthesis insert ancestors (Audre Lorde, Amié Césaire, Zora Neale Hurston, Sun Ra, Octavia Butler, Pauli Murray, Mary Lou Williams, Roy Hargrove and many more, close the parenthesis) the afro-surrealists taking me on a ride.

D. Scot Miller (2012) in the Afro-surreal Manifesto points to the possibility of how the idea of ridiculer, situated as the Afro-surrealist, pushes against and/or becomes a possibility in writing “Afro-Surrealists create sensuous gods to hunt down beautiful collapsed icons” similar to how López’s call for the necessity of decolonial acts of constructing/existing outside of/disrupting colonial spatialized time in response to recognizing/feeling/being touched by subordinated histories “when education quits giving in to the taming of societies.” The generative buoyancy between these statements constructs, for me, the ridiculer an ever-growing aporia of tasks the ridiculer must always engage in regards to the premise of creating deep education. Additionally, it is in the buoyancy of Miller’s and López’s statements, in chorus, that I am reminded of an inquiry I often posed to students in all the courses I have taught. Specifically, “where do you see the line between education and indoctrination?” This is not an inquiry rooted in an outcome.

However, in reading López and Miller together, I was drawn to considering what it means to engage an ethic of ridicule in education. Who are the ridiculers? and what systems need to be ridiculed? In this chapter López, herself, is a sort of ridiculer in her questioning of anthropological methods, historically and presently, in discussion of the Maya and broader Guatemalan culture and identity. The narrative she presents is one that is tragic, however one not uncommon. A narrative chronicling the violent touch, both literal and physical, deployed through the institution/corporation. A violent touch which situated indigenous ways of knowing and doing as barbaric. López also presents attempts of the institution/corporation to critique and correct their positionalities in the present, only to witness the institution/corporation’s variations of reformulated settler colonialism.

For Miller, the ridiculer, situated as the afro-surrealist, is given the responsibility to disrupt through the elevation and rediscovery of subordinated entities and histories via ancestral communing, which I see as speaking to the final line of López’s chapter. Repeated, the line is “The future, as a category of thinking, is up to what emerges in the playful act of ridicule.” Perhaps it is the push towards futurity, as delinearization of time, in the act of educating that calls for us to ridicule the hegemony of disciplines through the ancestors.

References

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